

REMARKS

The Official Action dated November 28, 2003 has been received and its contents carefully noted. In view thereof, claims 1 and 4 have been amended in order to clarify minor formalities set forth therein. As previously, claims 1, 2 and 4 through 10 are presently pending in the instant application.

With reference now to the Official Action, particularly page 2, claim 4 has been objected to as depending from a canceled claim. As can be seen from the foregoing amendments, claim 4 has been amended to now properly depend from independent claim 1 rather than previously canceled claim 3. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's claimed invention is now in proper formal condition for allowance.

With reference now to paragraph 3 of the Official Action, claims 1, 4, 6 and 8-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,969,745 issued to Blocker. This rejection is respectfully traversed in that the patent to Blocker neither discloses nor remotely suggests that which is presently set forth by Applicants' claimed invention.

As the Examiner can readily appreciate, each of independent claims 1 and 9 recite a semiconductor device including a semiconductor substrate, two semiconductor components provided on the principal surface of the substrate and multiple through holes which pass in front of the principal surface through the back side of the substrate are provided in a region of the substrate between the two adjacent components and a conductor film formed directly on the side faces of the through holes. Clearly, Applicants' claimed invention recites a semiconductor device which includes multiple through holes provided between the two adjacent components so as to increase isolation between the adjacent components while maintaining the strength of the substrate.

Further, independent claim 6 recites a similar structure wherein the first group of through holes are of one type and the second group of through holes are of another type such that the first type of through holes are different from the second type of through hole with the second type of through hole increasing isolation between the adjacent components while maintaining the strength of the substrate.

In reviewing the patent to Blocker, it is noted that this reference mainly discloses that each of the plurality of surfaces includes a through hole in a semiconductor device; in this case a field effect transistor, and clearly fails to disclose how the through hole is provided between the two components and particularly between two adjacent components as is recited by Applicants' claimed invention. Further, the Blocker clearly fails to disclose that the types of through holes are different.

While the Examiner stated that there are multiple through holes between a source electrode 10a and a source electrode 10d, it is clear from Figs. 2 and 3 of the Blocker reference that the source electrode 10a is not adjacent to the source electrode 10d and is separated by source electrodes 10b and 10c. Moreover, it is noted that the through holes referred to by the Examiner are formed in the respective source electrodes 10a through 10d and not between two adjacent components as is specifically recited by Applicants' claimed invention.

Moreover, with respect to independent claim 6, the types of through holes set forth by Blocker are clearly all identical to one another and are not of different types as is specifically recited by Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that each of independent claims 1, 6 and 9 as well as those claims which depend therefrom clearly distinguish over the teachings of Blocker and are in proper condition for allowance.

With reference now to page 3 of the Official Action, claim 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blocker. This rejection is likewise respectfully traversed in that the patent to Blocker neither discloses nor remotely suggests that which is presently set forth by Applicants' claimed invention.

Further to the remarks set forth hereinabove, claim 2 is directly dependent upon independent claim 1 and includes all limitations thereof. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that dependent claim 2 is likewise believed to be in proper condition for allowance.

Referring now to paragraph 6 of the Official Action, claims 5 and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blocker as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,959,905 issued to Payne. This rejection is

respectfully traversed in that the patent to Payne does nothing to overcome the aforementioned shortcomings associated with the teachings of Blocker.

While the Examiner states that the Blocker reference discloses the claimed invention except for multiple transistors and relies on the teachings of Payne as disclosing multiple transistors, as discussed hereinabove, the patent to Blocker clearly fails to disclose or remotely suggests Applicants' claimed invention as set forth in independent claims 1 and 6. Consequently, it is respectfully submitted that dependent claims 5 and 7 clearly distinguish over the prior art of record for the aforementioned reasons.

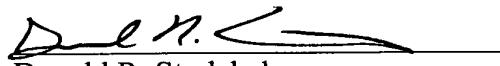
Additionally, it is noted that the Office Action Summary page at 2a indicates that the Official Action has been made final; however, there is no indication in the Official Action that the action is in fact made final by the Examiner. Several telephone calls to the Examiner failed to resolve this issue.

In this regard, it is respectfully submitted that the Official Action cannot be properly made final in that independent claim 6 has been rejected based on new cited prior art which was not necessitated by Applicants' amendments. In fact, independent claim 6 was not amended at all in the previous response filed August 19, 2003. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner indicate that the Official Action is in fact a non-final Office Action and have the Office Action Summary page reflect such. Furthermore, in that the foregoing amendments are set forth in order to place the present application in better condition for allowance by correcting only an improper dependency and a minor typographical error, it is respectfully requested that the foregoing amendments be entered and fully considered by the Examiner.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the finality of the Office Action if such is a final Office Action be withdrawn by the Examiner, that the objections and rejections of record be reconsidered on withdrawn by the Examiner, that claims 1, 2, and 4-10 be allowed and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner believe a conference would be of benefit in expediting the prosecution of the instant application, she is hereby invited to telephone counsel to arrange such a conference.

Respectfully submitted,


Donald R. Studebaker
Registration No. 32,815

NIXON PEABODY LLP
400 – Ninth Street, N.W.
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20004
Telephone: (202) 585-8000
Facsimile: (202) 585-8080